

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 167  
By DeBerry L

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Willie Elliot Johnson for  
laudable service as Principal of South Side High  
School in Memphis.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should salute those  
citizens who through their extraordinary efforts have distinguished themselves as community  
leaders of whom we can all be proud; and

WHEREAS, one such noteworthy individual is Willie Elliot Johnson, who, having served  
as Principal of South Side High School in Memphis for 24 years, will be honored by the South  
Side High School Alumni Association on March 22, 2003, on the occasion of the school's gym  
being named in his honor; and

WHEREAS, a native of Memphis, Willie Elliot Johnson was born on February 11, 1932,  
to parents Willie and Mable Johnson; growing up, he enjoyed the company of his two sisters,  
Dorothy and Sylvia; and

WHEREAS, a graduate of Grant School and Melrose High School, Mr. Johnson was  
studying at Tennessee State University when he enlisted in the U.S. Army to serve his country  
during the Korean War; and

WHEREAS, upon his discharge from the Army in 1955, Willie E. Johnson returned to Tennessee State University, earning a Bachelor's degree in Accounting and graduating with honors in 1957; and

WHEREAS, in 1959, Mr. Johnson began his illustrious teaching career at Booker T. Washington High School as one of the first National Defense Cadet Corps instructors; after two years, he was transferred to Douglas High School, where he continued to serve with great acumen and alacrity in the same capacity; and

WHEREAS, five years later, in 1966, Willie Elliot Johnson became an Administrative Intern, receiving training relative to school administration from a diverse group of successful principals; and

WHEREAS, upon completion of the intern program, Mr. Johnson was promoted to Assistant Principal at Booker T. Washington High School; he subsequently accepted his first and only elementary assignment, serving as the first African-American principal of an all-white school at White Station Elementary; and

WHEREAS, in 1971, Willie E. Johnson began his extraordinary tenure as Principal of his beloved South Side High School; until his retirement in 1995, he worked tirelessly to ensure that every student and faculty member was encouraged in their pursuit of excellence; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Johnson's meritorious service as an administrator, teacher, and mentor in the Memphis educational community spanned 41 years and positively influenced the lives of thousands of Tennesseans; and

WHEREAS, his many professional accomplishments aside, Willie Johnson is most grateful for the love and companionship he shares with his wife, Mary Bradley Johnson, and their children, Wileta Hatcher and her husband, James, Marva E. Johnson, Susan J. Johnson, and Judy McGhee and her husband, Johnny, and their grandsons, Johnny Edward McGhee and Julien Elliot McGhee; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Johnson epitomizes the spirit and commitment that are characteristic of a true Tennessean; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly finds it appropriate to pause in its deliberations to acknowledge and applaud Willie Elliot Johnson for his dedication to the State of Tennessee and its citizens and his commitment to quality education for all; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and commend Willie Elliot Johnson for his meritorious service to Memphis and the State of Tennessee as Principal of South Side High School and extend to him our best wishes for every future success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.